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Veteran Inmates in Maryland

Report for

Office of Transitional Services

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. All errors are my own.

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Introduction

This report presents the results from the Veterans Survey conducted in February 2013 of inmates identified as Veterans, and housed in 25 DPSCS facilities (Table 1). The objective of the survey was to describe the inmate veteran population, confirm veteran status, deployment history, identify benefits received, housing plans upon release, and ascertain the inmate's needs upon release. A second data source was a data extract from DPSCS IT systems which identified which inmates were on the "VA Match List", as well as providing institutional data (facility, security level, admittance date, offense, projected release date, and detail assignment), risk assessment history (date of assessment, risk level at intake), and additional demographic data (race, gender, date of birth).

Veteran Survey Sample

The DOC number was the matching identification number across the two data systems. In combining these data sources there were a total of 362 inmates¹; of those 362, 277 (77%) were both in the survey and in the DPSCS data, 63 (17%) were in the DPSCS data but were not surveyed, and 22 (6%) were surveyed, but were not in the DPSCS data extract.

As noted in Table 1, veterans from 25 facilities were identified. JCI had the highest number of veterans (61) and 45 (74%) were surveyed; RCI had the next highest number (44) and 100% of those veterans were surveyed. While caution should be exercised as to generalizing these results to the broader veteran inmate population by *specific* institution nor by gender (as only 2% of those surveyed are women), given there was a total of 277 inmates who completed the survey, and an average survey completion rate of 68%, the sample size is sufficient to extrapolate the data to assist in setting policy and practice regarding the needs of and incarcerated veterans in Maryland DPSCS facilities.

Table 1: Surveys Completed by Facility

Name of Facility	N Vets Identified	Number Surveyed**	% Surveyed Completed Overall
BCCC	2	2	100%
BCF	3	3	100%
BPRU	3	0	0%
CMCF	12	6	50%
CMHCJ	1	0	0%
ECI	39	28	72%
ECI-A	8	7	88%
HDU	4	2	50%
JCI	61	45	74%
JPRU	5	3	60%
MCAC	1	0	0%
MCIH	33	32	97%

¹ This is after data cleaning identified 56 blank or duplicate records in the survey data. Eleven records without a DOC number were deleted, leaving 43 duplicate records. These duplicate records were reviewed and those that contained more complete data were retained, while the other record(s) were deleted.

Name of Facility	N Vets Identified	Number Surveyed**	% Surveyed Completed Overall
MCIJ	18	15	83%
MCIW	6	5	83%
MCTC	35	28	80%
MRDCC	4	2	50%
MTC	7	5	71%
NBCI	10	9	90%
PATX-W	1	1	100%
PATXA	1	0	0%
PATXNT	3	2	67%
PHPRU	1	1	100%
RCI	44	44	100%
SMPRU	3	3	100%
WCI	35	34	97%
Total	340	277	
Average Completion Across Facilities			68%

**Excludes 22 Surveys completed on inmates with no corresponding DPSCS data.

(N=Number of those with data available to assess)

May not total 100% due to rounding

Demographics, Educational Attainment and Employment Status

Table 2 provides statistics on the veterans surveyed and those in the DPSCS data. The average age of these veterans at the time of the survey was 53 years old, ranging from 23 to 89 years old. The average age at the time of intake into the facility was 39 years old, ranging from 19 to 76. The majority are male (331 of 339 or 98%), 59% were African American and 40% were White.

Marital status among the 273 veterans surveyed and who responded to this question indicated 33% were single, never married but lived with someone as married (less than 1%), married (17%) and widowed, separated or divorced (50%).

Educational attainment was measured at the highest level attained at the time of the survey – with most of those surveyed indicating they had at least a high school degree or equivalency (41%), as well as some college experience (29%). A few had less than a high school degree (6%) and the remaining had at least an Associate's degree or above (23%).

Employment status at the time of incarceration indicates 72% were employed – 63% full time, 4% part time, and 5% were self-employed; 22% were unemployed and the remaining were in school, retired, or disabled/on SSI/ or receiving Workers Compensation.

In terms of housing, most (67%) were living in their own house or apartment, while 25% were in someone else's home; very few identified (around 5%) as being in a shelter/homeless or place to place, while a few were living in other locations such as a military base.

Table 2: Veteran Demographics, Educational Attainment, Employment and Housing

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Age as of Survey	340			23 to 89	52.95 (10.7)
Age at Intake to Facility	340			19 to 76	38.87 (11.5)
Gender – Male	339		98	0 to 1	.98 (.15)
Race²	338				
African American		201	59%		
White		135	40%		
Other		2	1%		
Marital Status	273				
Single/Never Married		91	33%		
Not Married, Cohabitated		1	<1%		
Married		45	17%		
Sep./Divorce/Widow			50%		
Education Highest Level at Survey	276				
6 th grade or less		0	0%		
7 th to 9 th grade		9	3%		
10 th to 11 th grade		9	3%		
GED/HS Equivalent		58	21%		
HS Grad		55	20%		
Some College		81	29%		
Associates		26	9%		
Bachelors		30	11%		
Masters		5	2%		
PhD or Law Degree		3	1%		
Employment Prior to Incarceration	273				
Employed Full Time		172	63%		
Employed Part Time		12	4%		
Self Employed		14	5%		
School		2	1%		
Retired		3	1%		
Disabled/SSI/Workers Comp		9	3%		
Unemployed/Laid Off		61	22%		
Housing Prior to Prison	232				
Own House or Apt		157	67%		
Someone else's Home or Apt		57	25%		
Shelter or Rooming House		4	2%		
Homeless or on Street		2	<1%		
No Set Place – Moved Around A Lot		6	3%		
Other (e.g., Military Barrack)		6	3%		

(N=Number of those with data available to assess) May not total 100% due to rounding

² Ethnicity from DPSCS data was reviewed, although there were very few differences between race and ethnicity. For instance, only 1 person was identified as Hispanic in the ethnicity data.

Institutional Status

Among the 340 veterans with institutional data, they had been in the facility on average 14 years, ranging from less than one year to 47 years. Among the 222 veterans who were not classified as lifers³, they were sentenced to the facility with an average sentence of 16 years, ranging less than 1 year (10 months was the shortest sentence) to 84 years. The remaining time to release, (again excluding lifers) ranged from 1 day (an inmate was surveyed the day they were leaving) to 74 years, but on average they were to be released within less than 8 years.

Offender type was coded from the offense data in DPSCS data extract. The conviction was cataloged by type of offense (person, sex, drug and property) and class (felony (coded as 1), or misdemeanor (coded as 0)) and the offense seriousness category from I (most serious) to VII (least serious) (which was reverse coded so that a higher value indicated a more serious crime) in accordance with Maryland State statutes.⁴ Offense ranged from murder (first and second degrees), manslaughter, rape, sexual abuse of a minor, assault, distribution and possession of CDS, as well as auto theft and theft. Ninety-two (92%) of the offenses were for felony charges with the highest number of convictions (68%) were Category I or II offenses (the highest seriousness categories).

The security and risk level of the veterans in this sample were also explored. The majority were medium security (65%), with 13% in maximum and the remaining either minimum or prerelease. The period since the intake risk assessment varied from 6 to 35 months, on average the intake occurred a little over 2 years ago. The majority of veterans were listed as low or low-moderate risk (78%), with the remaining split between moderate and high risk.

Work assignment data was provided for 130 veterans. The data was categorized into broad categories. Veterans worked most often in hazmat and sanitation (22%), at MCE (a meat cutter or metal worker) or other vocational skilled labor (e.g., mechanic, electrical wiring) (15%), food and dietary (12%) and 10% were engaged with MCE in graphics and/or desktop publishing. Nine veterans were listed as either not assigned or in segregation.

Table 3: Institutional Status

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Length of Stay in Facility (in Years)	340			<1 yr to 47	14.07 (11.4)
Sentence (Excluding Lifers)					
Sentence in Years	222			<1 to 84	16.1 (13.5)
Sentence in Months	222			10 to 1011	193.8 (162.1)
Time to Release (Excluding Lifers)					
Years to Release	222			<1 to 74	7.85 (10.1)
Months to Release	222			<1 to 886	94.2 (121.8)
Days to Release	222			<1 to 26963	2865.9 (3705.9)

³ Lifers were identified both as "LIFE" in the DPSCS data and in calculating the sentence from admittance date to date of release, there were two individuals who were sentenced to over 100 years. As this functionally is a life sentence, they were identified as Lifers for purposes of this analysis.

⁴ The source for statute classification information was from the [Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Guidelines Manual Guidelines Offense Table](#) Appendix A, updated February 2006, with updates from the 2012 manual.

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Offender Type	314				
Person		186	59%		
Sex		91	29%		
Drug		18	6%		
Property		19	6%		
Offender Class Prop. Felony Charges	314			0 to 1	.92 (27)
Seriousness of Offense					
Category 1 – Most Serious		141	45%		
Category 2		72	23%		
Category 3		19	6%		
Category 4		44	14%		
Category 5		21	7%		
Category 6		2	<1%		
Category 7 – Least Serious		15	5%		
Security Level	340				
Maximum		45	13%		
Medium		221	65%		
Minimum		51	15%		
Pre-Release		23	7%		
Time Since Risk Intake (in Months)	279			6 to 35	25.0 (6.5)
Final Risk Assessment⁵	302				
High		32	11%		
Moderate		35	12%		
Low-Moderate		48	16%		
Low		187	62%		
Work Assignment	130				
Sanitation/Hazmat		29	22%		
Vocational/MCE Skilled		19	15%		
MCE Computers/Graphics		13	10%		
Food and Dietary		16	12%		
Hospital, Therapeutic Community, Inmate Observation Aid, Wheelchair Aid		12	9%		
Admin/Clerk/Education, Tutor, Library		9	7%		
Laundry/Other/Dog Handler		23	18%		
Unassigned/Segregation		9	7%		

⁵ There were several risk variables to select from, selection of this one was based primarily on that the fact that had the least amount of missing data and seemed to generally reflect the other risk variables.

Veteran Status

Table 3 provides the results of the survey with respect to veteran status. Among the 340 veterans with data either in DPSCS or who completed the survey, 257 (or 75%) were on the VA Match list; while 57 (17%) were not and 26 (8%) did not self-identify as a veteran. In addition, among the 276 completed surveys, DPSCS staff reported that 71% of the inmate files contained the DD214 form, while the remaining 29% did not.

The status of 226 of 283 (80%) of the veterans at incarceration was either separated or retired; with 11% in active duty in the armed forces (7%), National Guard and Reserves (both 2%), while 23% were inactive. Of those who were separated or retired, with 225 reporting, 63% were honorably discharged, 24% received a general-honorable discharge, and 2% specified a medical discharge. The remaining discharged other than honorable, dishonorably, and bad conduct.

Respondents were to select all the branches of service they participated in, and several participated in more than one arm of the service. On average, most served in one branch, but several did serve in more than one. Of the 291 veterans reporting, they served principally in the Army (60%), with the Navy (17%); Marines (16%), Air Force (9%), and Coast Guard (2%). The total time served, in months was from less than 1 month to 480 months, averaging 60 months (or 5 years).⁶

Most of these veterans (66%) have never been deployed to a combat zone. However, among those who identified they had been deployed, most served in Vietnam (40%) and the Persian Gulf (27%), with 20% serving in other combat zones. Nine veterans either refused to say where they had been deployed or didn't know. Here again, note that they were to select "all that apply" thus these totals will exceed 100%. The total number of locations deployed was the sum of identified zones (thus excluding the don't know/refused) with each veteran on average deployed to 1.12 places, within a range of 1 to 3 locations deployed.

Table 3: Veteran Status

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Inmate on VA Match List?	340				
Yes		257	75%		
No		57	17%		
Did not Self-Identify as a Veteran		26	8%		
Is DD214 in Inmate File?	276				
Yes		196	71%		
No		80	29%		
Military Status At Incarceration	283				
Active Duty - Armed Forces		21	7%		
Active Duty - National Guard		7	2%		
Active Duty - Reserves		6	2%		
Inactive Duty		23	8%		
Separated or Retired		226	80%		

⁶ One individual who has been incarcerated since 1977 states he has not yet been discharged and accounts for raising the range to 480 months (40 years). However, even after excluding this case from the analysis, the mean remains an average of 59 months with a range of service up to 300 months.

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Discharge Status	225				
Honorable		141	63%		
General (Honorable Conditions)		53	24%		
General (Without Honorable)		4	2%		
Other Than Honorable		17	8%		
Bad Conduct		2	<1%		
Dishonorable		3	1%		
Medical		4	2%		
Other		1	<1%		
Branch Served*	291				
Army		174	60%		
Navy		48	17%		
Marines		46	16%		
Air Force		25	9%		
Coast Guard		5	2%		
Total Branches Served	291			1 to 2	1.02 (.15)
Total Time Served (in Months)	291			<1 to 480	60.7 (58.4)
Deployment Status	299				
Never Deployed		198	66%		
Deployed		101	34%		
Of Those Deployed, Where?*	92				
Iraq or Afghanistan		8	9%		
Persian Gulf		25	27%		
Vietnam/Southeast Asia		37	40%		
Korea		5	5%		
WWII		0	0%		
Other Zone (e.g., Bosnia/Somalia)		18	20%		
Refused to Say/Don't Know		9	10%		
Total Combat Locations Deployed	83			1 to 3	1.12 (.36)

(N=Number of those with data available to assess)

May not total 100% due to rounding

*Respondents select "All that apply" so total may exceed 100%.

Veteran Benefits

Table 4 details the benefits status of these veterans. At the time the survey was conducted, 81 veterans (28%) were enrolled in VA Health Care, 11 (4%) were receiving a pension, and 7 (3%) were compensated for PTSD.

Although 65 veterans (23%) have a service connected disability, only 19 (or 30%) receive disability compensation; 46 (70%) believe they are eligible for compensation, another 17 (27%) are not sure.

Exploring the intersection of whether the veteran reported they were eligible to receive disability compensation and those who received the benefit, only 41% (N=19) who report they are eligible receive the benefit. The remaining who have a disability who state they are eligible (N=26) or are not sure (N=17), do not receive disability compensation.⁷

Survey respondents also advised whether they received various VA benefits. The vast majority (71%) had not; of the remaining, 6% received vocational rehabilitation; 56% had participated in the GI bill, 40% received a home loan, and 4% received other types of benefits including medical for one veteran, and another stated they received treatment for PTSD.

Table 4: Veteran Benefits Received

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Enrolled in VA Health Care?	285				
Yes		81	28%		
No		204	72%		
Receiving VA Pension?	283				
Yes		11	4%		
No		272	96%		
Compensated for PTSD?	282				
Yes		7	3%		
No		275	97%		
Have Service Connected Disabilities?	284				
Yes		65	23%		
No		219	77%		
Receive Disability Compensation?	64				
Yes		19	30%		
No		45	70%		
Eligible for Disability Compensation?	64				
Yes		46	70%		
No		1	2%		
Not Sure		17	27%		
Benefits: Receive any the following?	299				
No – I do not receive any benefits		213	71%		
Yes – Received Benefits					
Of those who received benefits, have you received any of the following:*	86				
Vocational Rehabilitation		5	6%		
GI Bill		48	56%		
VA Home Loan		34	40%		
VA Other (Medical, PTSD Treatment)		3	4%		

N=Number of those with data available to assess)

May not total 100% due to rounding

*Respondents select “All that apply” so total may exceed 100%.

⁷ Results not shown but available upon request.

Housing Plans Upon Release

Veterans were asked about their housing plans upon release.⁸ As the focus of this question surrounds post-release housing plans, the 98 lifers who completed the survey were not included in the results. As indicated in Table 5, most veterans plan to return to live family (44%), or to a home they own or rent (15%). A little more than half believe they can remain there permanently.

As indicated below, 62% of veterans surveyed are not “at risk” for housing instability because they report that they are returning to live on their own, or with family or with friends and can stay there more than 1 month or permanently. Looking at the remaining 38% however, the housing for these individuals is riskier – 23% either cannot stay where they plan to go for more than one month, or they are not returning to family, friends or on their own whereas the highest risk group (15%) have neither long term housing nor are returning to family, friends or on their own

Table 5: Housing Upon Release and Housing Stability, Excluding Lifers

	N	Freq	%
Housing At Release	173		
House I Own		14	8%
House I Rent		12	7%
With Family		77	44%
With Friends		10	6%
Place to Place		1	<1%
Abandoned Building		1	<1%
Shelter		6	4%
Homeless On Streets or Park		8	5%
Residential Drug Treatment		2	1%
Transitional Recovery Program		9	5%
Other (Hospital, VA Housing, etc)		8	5%
Don't Know		25	15%
How Long You Can Stay?	144		
1 to 3 nights		1	<1%
4 nights to 1 week		0	0%
2 to 4 weeks		2	2%
More than 1 Month		23	16%
Permanently		75	52%
Don't Know		43	30%

⁸Housing plans replicate questions posed to other DPSCS populations in studies conducted by the author. For more information about these studies, please see Flower, Shawn M. (2009). Baltimore City REP/PI Window Replication Project Preliminary Analysis of Survey Results and At Time of Release - Inmate Homeless Census Report for the Transition Services and Community Initiative Project -- both reports are available upon request.

	N	Freq	%
Housing Risk	143		
Highest Risk Group -- Not Living On Own/Family and/or with Friends and Unsure About how Long Can Stay or Can Stay 30 Days or Less		22	15%
Vulnerable – Either do not have long term housing or Not living on Own/Family and/or Friends		32	23%
Not At Risk		89	62%

N=Number of those with data available to assess)

May not total 100% due to rounding

Post Release Needs

Finally, veterans were asked to identify which services would be needed upon release. Again, as with the housing question, the focus of this question surrounds post-release needs, so the 98 lifers who completed the survey were not included in the results reported. As evidenced in Table 6, among veterans who reported 1 or more assistance areas, most need assistance with medical services (94%), followed by VA benefit enrollment (86%), financial assistance (85%), employment services (82%), transportation assistance (77%) and housing (76%). On average, they identified 7.85 needs, on a range from 1 to 13 needs.

Table 6: Identified Post-Release Needs, Excluding Lifers

	N	Freq.	Percent	Range	Mean (SD)
Post Release Assistance Needed?*	165				
Housing Services		125	76%		
Employment Assistance		136	82%		
Vocational Training		99	60%		
Educational Services		96	58%		
Medical Services		155	94%		
Mental Health		95	57%		
Family Services		63	38%		
Child Support Assistance		29	18%		
Financial Assistance		141	85%		
Substance Abuse Treatment		76	46%		
Transportation Assistance		127	77%		
VA Benefit Enrollment		142	86%		
Other (Help with PTSD, Legal Assistance, Discharge Upgrade)		12	7%		
Total Needs Identified	165			1 to 13	7.85 (2.8)

N=Number of those with data available to assess)

May not total 100% due to rounding

*Respondents select “All that apply” so total may exceed 100%.

Conclusion

This report is descriptive – it presents the results from the Veterans survey conducted in February 2013 from 277 inmates identified as Veterans and incorporates DPSCS data to provide a fuller picture of the life circumstances, service history, benefit record, and anticipated needs post-release. As this is likely one of the first explorations of veterans in Maryland prisons, this document is intended to serve as an informational baseline. The data is provided, but without interpretation of the meaning of the findings, nor are policy or practice implications explored by the author.

As noted in the introduction, while caution should be exercised as to generalizing these results to the broader veteran inmate population by *specific* institution or by gender, the sample size is sufficient to extrapolate the data to assist in setting policy and practice regarding the needs of incarcerated veterans in Maryland DPSCS facilities.